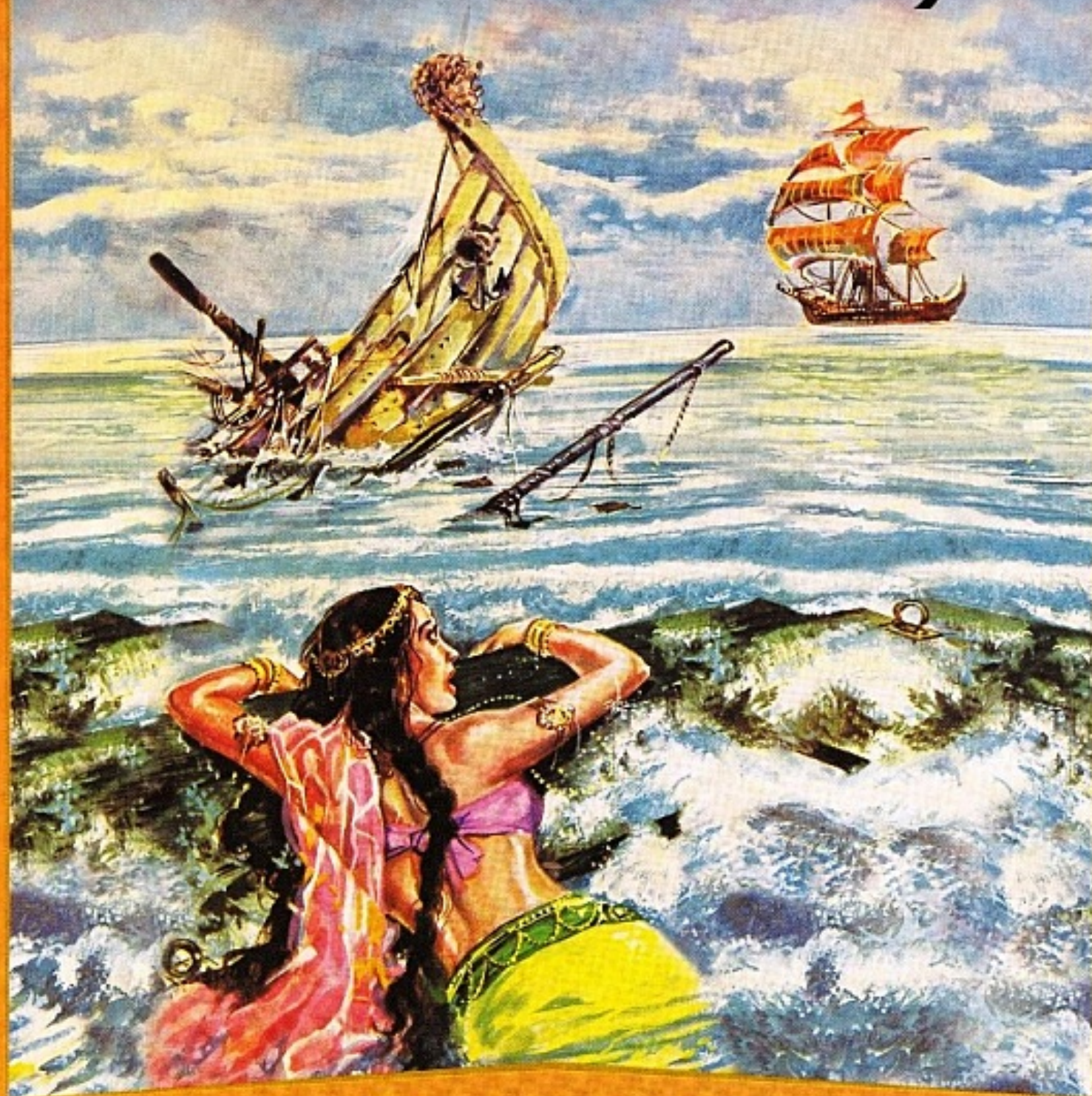


NO. 10011 RS. 80



# Great Sanskrit Plays



3 Illustrated Classics from India  
Ratnavali • Udayana • Vasantasena





## Illustrated Classics From India

### Ratnavali A Sanskrit Play

The story Ratnavali is attributed to Emperor Harsha, who ruled from Kanauj in the 7th century AD. Princess Ratnavali of Simhala is shipwrecked en route to Kaushambi where she was going in order to marry King Udayana, her betrothed. The king's wise minister, Yaugandharayana, recognises her, but to bide for time he entrusts her to Queen Vasavadatta, her own cousin, as a maid named Sagarika.

King Harsha was a great patron of art and literature. Renowned Sanskrit poets like Bana Bhatta were in his court. Harsha himself was a poet and playwright. He wrote three Sanskrit plays: Nagananda, Priyadarshika and Ratnavali.

Harsha obtained material for these plays from Gunadhya's Brihatkatha, which was a treasure house of stories. Ratnavali and Priyadarshika have similar plots. Udayana, the legendary king of Kaushambi, is the hero in both plays. Stories of King Udayana and Queen Vasavadatta were well-known in the world of ancient Indian literature. Harsha was adept at contriving dramatic situations and intrigue. This earned him the title *Nipuna Kavi* or the skilful poet.

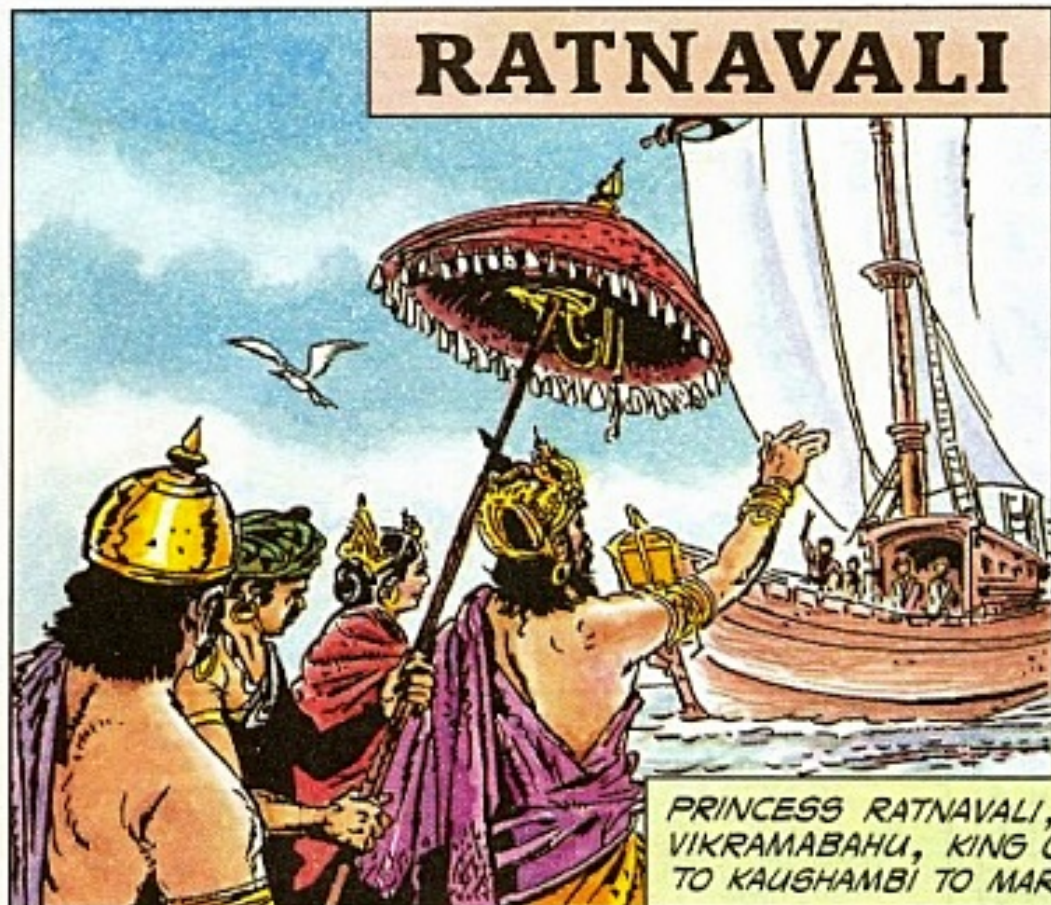
Script: Subba Rao   Illustrations: Pratap Mulick

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# RATNAVALI



PRINCESS RATNAVALI, THE DAUGHTER OF VIKRAMABAHU, KING OF SIMHALA, WAS GOING TO KAUSHAMBI TO MARRY KING UDAYANA.

VASUBHUTI, THE KING'S MINISTER, WHO WAS ESCORTING RATNAVALI, TURNED TO BABHRAVYA, THE ENVOY FROM KAUSHAMBI.

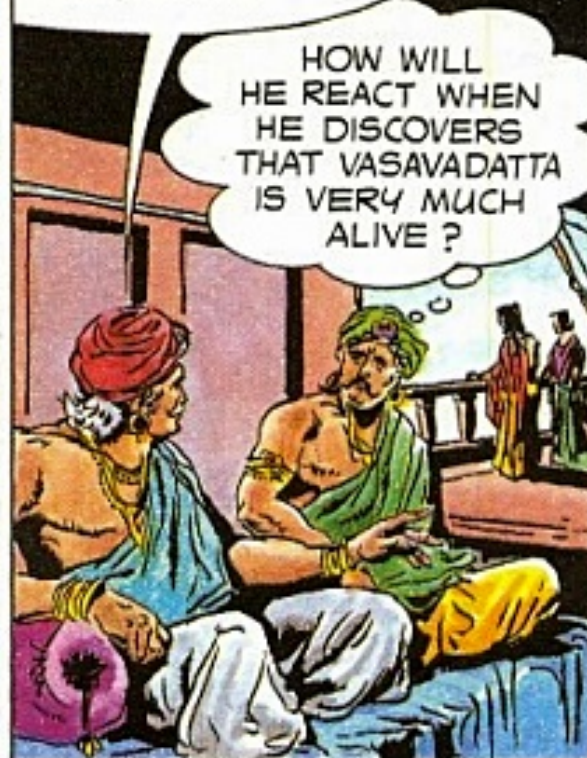
OUR KING WAS SAD TO HEAR THAT HIS NIECE, KING UDAYANA'S QUEEN, VASAVADATTA, DIED IN THE FIRE AT LAVANAKA.



SO KING VIKRAMABAHU BELIEVES THE RUMOUR SPREAD BY THE MINISTER YAUGANDHARAYANA!



TO KEEP THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO FAMILIES ALIVE, HE HAS AGREED TO SEND OUR PRINCESS TO KAUSHAMBI.



HOW WILL HE REACT WHEN HE DISCOVERS THAT VASAVADATTA IS VERY MUCH ALIVE?



YOUNG RATNAVALI WAS THINKING ABOUT VASAVADATTA AND KING UDAYANA.

MY COUSIN, WHOM I HAVE NEVER MET, IS DEAD. THE KING LOVED HER DEEPLY. WILL I BE ABLE TO WIN HIS HEART?



SUDDENLY —

WHAT'S HAPPENING?  
THE SHIP HAS  
STARTED TO  
ROLL!



A SUDDEN STORM HAD BEGUN. THE HUGE WAVES TOSSED THE SHIP ABOUT...

HELP!



...AND IT BROKE INTO A THOUSAND PIECES.

OH GOD!





RATNAVALI MANAGED TO CLUTCH  
A PLANK...



... AND KEEP AFLOAT.



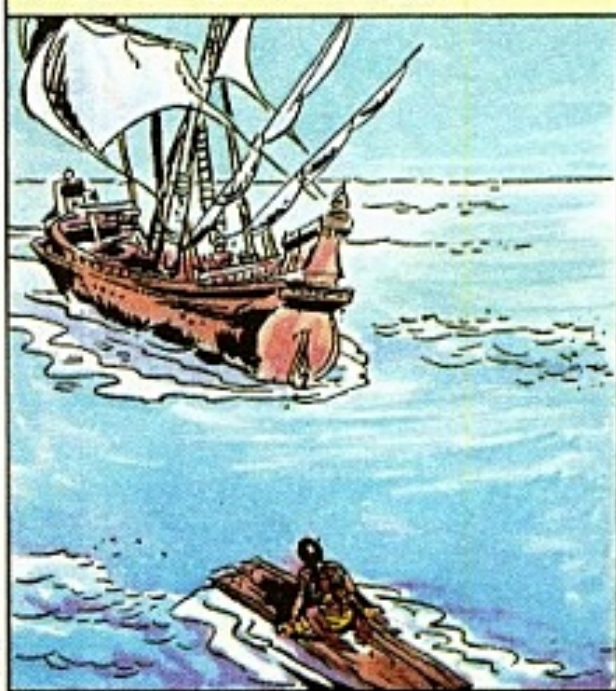
FORTUNATELY, SOON AFTER,  
SHE SPOTTED ANOTHER SHIP.



THE MASTER OF THE SHIP, A MERCHANT WHO  
WAS SAILING TO KAUSHAMBI, HEARD THE CRY.



HE ORDERED THE SHIP TO TURN  
AROUND TOWARDS HER...

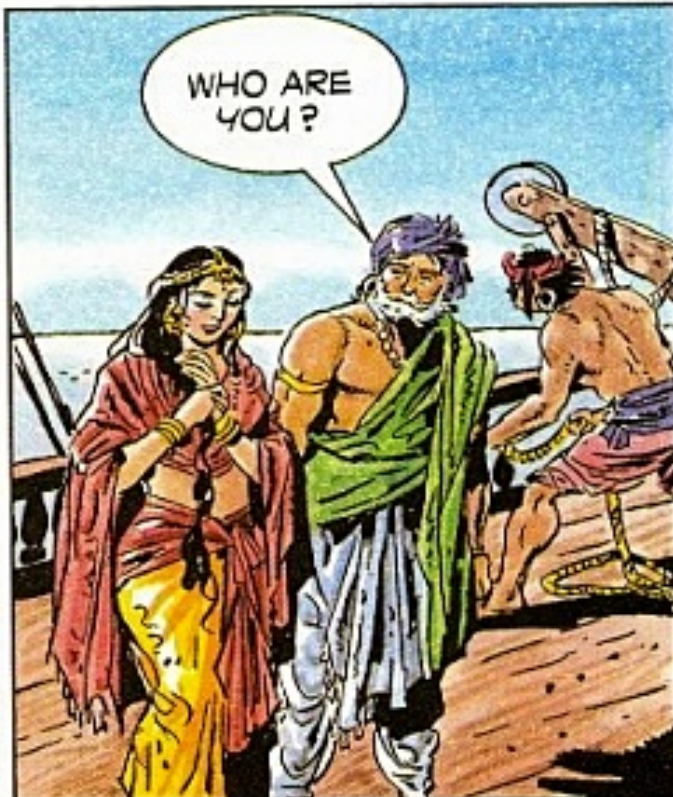




... AND HELPED HER ABOARD.



WHO ARE YOU?



RATNAVALI REMAINED SILENT.

HOW CAN I TELL HIM THAT I AM THE PRINCESS OF SIMHALA? SEEING ME IN MY PRESENT STATE, WOULD HE BELIEVE ME?

WHY DOESN'T SHE ANSWER? IS SHE SUFFERING FROM A LOSS OF MEMORY?



ANYWAY FROM THE NECKLACE OF PRECIOUS STONES SHE IS WEARING, IT IS CLEAR THAT SHE IS A LADY OF NOBLE BIRTH.





MEANWHILE AT KAUSHAMBI, YAGANDHARAYANA, KING UDAYANA'S LOYAL MINISTER, WAS ANXIOUSLY PACING UP AND DOWN HIS CHAMBER.

PRINCESS RATNAVALI WILL SOON BE HERE. AND I HAVE NOT YET SPOKEN TO THE KING ABOUT HER.



HE LOVES VASAVADATTA TOO MUCH. HE WILL NOT AGREE TO MARRY ANOTHER WOMAN AND YET....



JUST THEN A GUARD ENTERED.

BRING HIM IN

SIR, A MERCHANT WANTS TO MEET YOU.



THE MERCHANT WALKED IN, BRINGING RATNAVALI WITH HIM.

SIR, I RESCUED THIS LADY FROM A SHIP-WRECK. I DON'T KNOW WHO SHE IS, BUT COULD I ENTRUST HER TO YOUR CARE?

THAT NECKLACE! SHE MUST BE RATNAVALI!



I WILL NOT LET HER SEE THAT I KNOW WHO SHE IS. I WILL TAKE HER TO THE QUEEN AND....







QUEEN VASAVADATTA LOOKED AFFECTIONATELY AT THE GIRL.



VASAVADATTA DID NOT KNOW THAT SAGARIKA WAS NONE OTHER THAN RATNAVALI, HER COUSIN.

AS Y AUGANDHARAYANA LEFT —



EXCELLENT! RATNAVALI IS NOW BOUND TO COME ACROSS THE KING AND THEN I WILL LET MATTERS TAKE THEIR OWN COURSE.

VASAVADATTA TURNED TO SAGARIKA.





SAGARIKA WAS HAPPY AND ENJOYED HER LIGHT DUTIES.

THE QUEEN IS  
KIND AND  
GENTLE.



THEN CAME THE FESTIVAL OF  
MADANA, THE GOD OF LOVE.

SAGARIKA,  
TODAY THE  
QUEEN WILL  
WORSHIP  
MADANA IN  
THE GARDEN.

O SUSANGATA,  
I WOULD LOVE  
TO BE THERE,  
BUT I HAVE TO  
LOOK AFTER  
MEDHAVINI.



I WILL DO THAT  
FOR YOU, SAGARIKA.  
GO AND ATTEND  
THE CEREMONY.

SUSANGATA,  
YOU ARE SO  
GOOD.



SO CARRYING MATERIALS FOR WORSHIP,  
SAGARIKA FOLLOWED THE QUEEN INTO  
THE GARDEN.





MEANWHILE, PEOPLE WERE OUT IN THE STREETS, CELEBRATING THE FESTIVAL BY THROWING COLOURS AT ONE ANOTHER. FROM THE PALACE KING UDAYANA WATCHED THE MERRY-MAKING WITH VASANTAKA, THE COURT JESTER



JUST THEN TWO OF THE QUEEN'S MAIDS ENTERED.

VICTORY TO YOUR MAJESTY! THE QUEEN COMMANDS... NO, NO... THE QUEEN REQUESTS....

THE WORD 'COMMANDS' IS MORE APPROPRIATE ON MADANA'S FESTIVAL. TELL ME WHAT THE QUEEN COMMANDS.



THE QUEEN REQUESTS YOUR PRESENCE AT MAKARANDA GARDEN WHERE SHE WILL BE WORSHIPPING THE GOD OF LOVE.

WE WILL COME AT ONCE.

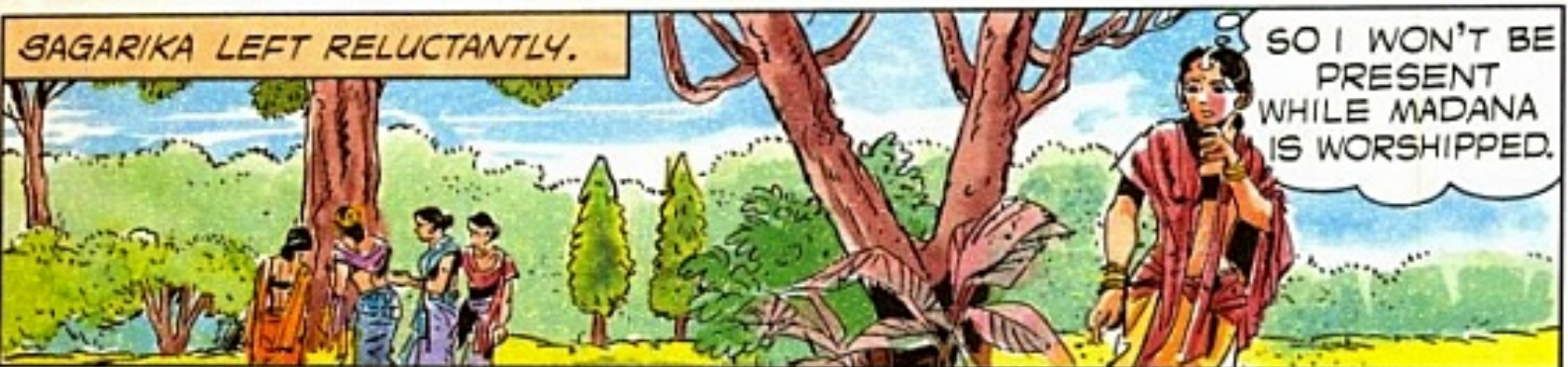


WHEN THE KING REACHED THE GARDEN—



FRIEND, FLOWERS ARE IN BLOOM AND THE HUMMING OF BEES SOUNDS LIKE THE JINGLE OF WOMEN'S ANKLETS.











SUDDENLY SAGARIKA SAW THE KING —



OH! IN THIS COUNTRY MADANA COMES IN PERSON TO BE WORSHIPPED. IN MY COUNTRY WE HAVE ONLY HIS IMAGE TO WORSHIP!

THEN SAGARIKA OFFERED HER FLOWERS FROM WHERE SHE STOOD.

SALUTATIONS TO YOU, MADANA! MAY THIS VISION OF YOU BRING JOY TO MY LIFE!



THEN, AS SHE SET OUT FOR THE PALACE, SHE HEARD A GUARD CALLING OUT—

...MANY PRINCES ARE WAITING TO PAY THEIR RESPECTS TO KING UDAYANA...



WHAT!

SAGARIKA TURNED BACK.

SO THAT WAS KING UDAYANA AND I AM BETROTHED TO HIM! THEN THE QUEEN MUST BE MY COUSIN, VASAVADATTA!





BUT IT CAN'T BE!  
VASAVADATTA DIED  
IN THE FIRE ....



AS UDAYANA AND VASAVADATTA PASSED BY —

HOW  
HELPLESS  
I AM. I CAN'T  
EVEN LOOK  
UPON HIM, LET  
ALONE TALK  
TO HIM.



UDAYANA'S FACE HAUNTED SAGARIKA  
AND SHE HARDLY SLEPT THAT NIGHT.  
THE NEXT MORNING SHE WENT TO  
THE GARDEN HOUSE TAKING WITH HER  
A DRAWING BOARD, BRUSHES AND  
COLOURS.

I SAW HIM BUT  
FOR A MOMENT. YET  
MY HEART YEARNS  
FOR HIM.



AS SHE SAT DOWN AND PAINTED A  
PICTURE OF KING UDAYANA FROM  
MEMORY ...



... SUSANGATA CREPT UP  
FROM BEHIND HER —

WHAT ARE YOU  
PAINTING,  
SAGARIKA?













ATTRACTED BY THE FOOD IN THE CAGE, THE MONKEY OPENED IT. THE FRIGHTENED BIRD FLEW OUT.



MEANWHILE  
OUTSIDE —

SUSANGATA, SOMEONE  
MAY SEE THE  
DRAWING. WE SHOULD  
HAVE RUBBED  
IT OFF.

YOU HAVE SOMETHING  
MORE SERIOUS THAN  
THAT TO WORRY ABOUT.  
LOOK! MEDHAVINI  
HAS FLOWN AWAY.



AND WHAT IS WORSE, SHE  
HAS HEARD EVERY WORD  
WE UTTERED. WE  
MUST CATCH HER.





MEANWHILE, UDAYANA ACCOMPANIED BY VASANTAKA, WAS ON HIS WAY TO THE GARDEN, WHEN VASANTAKA STOPPED ABRUPTLY.

THERE IS A GHOST IN THIS BAKULA TREE. LET'S RUN AWAY.

WHAT NONSENSE!



LOOK! IT'S ONLY A TALKING BIRD!

WHAT!

O SILLY BIRD, DID YOU THINK I WAS REALLY AFRAID OF YOU? WAIT, I WILL KNOCK YOU DOWN FROM THIS BAKULA TREE.

FOOL! SHE IS SAYING SOMETHING PLEASANT. LET'S LISTEN.







MEANWHILE SAGARIKA AND SUSANGATA NOT FINDING THE BIRD, WERE RETURNING TO THE GARDEN HOUSE FOR THE PAINTING.

IT IS YOUR PORTRAIT!  
AND THAT OF A  
MAIDEN TOO!

THAT IS VASANTAKA  
SPEAKING. THE KING  
MUST BE HERE, TOO  
LET'S HIDE AND  
LISTEN TO THEM.


MEANWHILE UDAYANA HAD TAKEN THE  
PAINTING.

O UDAYANA,  
YOU SEEM  
SPELLBOUND!  
WHY DOES  
THE PORTRAIT  
HOLD SUCH  
FASCINATION  
FOR YOU?

SAGARIKA HELD HER BREATH.

MY LIFE  
DEPENDS ON HIS  
ANSWER. WHAT  
WILL HE SAY?






THIS MAIDEN EXCELS  
LAKSHMI IN GRACE. SHE  
HAS CAPTIVATED MY  
HEART.



HOW  
SOOTHING  
HIS WORDS  
ARE!




I MUST FIND  
A WAY OF  
BRINGING THE  
KING AND MY  
FRIEND  
TOGETHER.



SAGARIKA, WAIT  
HERE. I WILL  
GO AND GET THE  
PORTRAIT.

ALL RIGHT,  
BUT PLEASE COME  
BACK SOON.

SUSANGATA WENT INTO THE GARDEN HOUSE AND CAME OUT AFTER A LITTLE WHILE WITH THE KING AND VASANTAKA.



THE KING IS COMING  
THIS WAY! I HOPE  
SUSANGATA HASN'T  
TOLD HIM IT WAS  
I WHO DREW HIS  
PORTRAIT.







BUT THE CLUMSY VASANTAKA DROPPED THE PORTRAIT.

LET'S GO TOGETHER.

MY LORD, I CAME THIS WAY TO SEE IF THE NAVAMALIKA CREEPER HAS BLOSSOMED.



KANCHANA MALA, THE QUEEN'S COMPANION, PICKED UP THE PORTRAIT AND SHOWED IT TO THE QUEEN.

IT'S MY LORD AND SAGARIKA!



MY LORD, WHO HAS DRAWN THIS?



I TOLD THE KING THAT A SELF-PORTRAIT IS DIFFICULT TO DO. HE DISAGREED— AND TO PROVE HIS POINT HE DREW HIS OWN PORTRAIT.

AND THE GIRL?









THE NEXT DAY VASANTAKA  
MET SUSANGATA.

SUSANGATA, MY  
FRIEND PINES FOR  
SAGARIKA. CAN'T  
YOU DO SOMETHING  
ABOUT IT?

THIS EVENING I WILL  
BRING SAGARIKA TO THE  
MADHAVI BOWER, DRESSED  
IN THE QUEEN'S  
ROBES AND I MYSELF  
WILL BE IN KANCHANA  
MALA'S DRESS.

LITTLE DID THEY REALISE  
THAT KANCHANA MALA, WHO  
HAPPENED TO BE PASSING  
BY HAD HEARD EVERY WORD.

SHE TOLD THE QUEEN WHAT SHE HAD OVERHEARD—

I CAN'T  
BELIEVE  
IT!

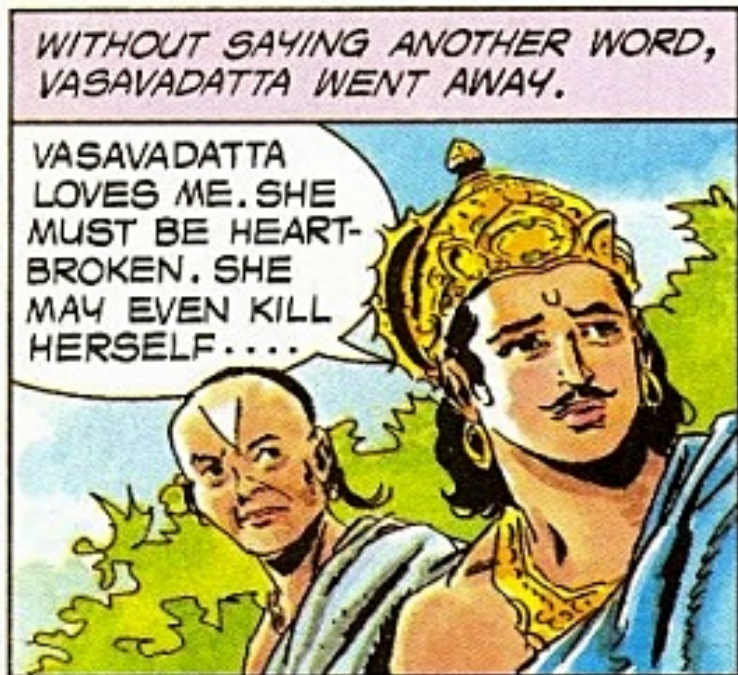
YOU WILL,  
IF YOU VISIT THE  
MADHAVI BOWER  
THIS EVENING.

THAT EVENING AT THE  
MADHAVI BOWER—

SUSANGATA, YOU LOOK  
QUITE CHARMING DRESSED  
IN KANCHANA MALA'S  
CLOTHES AND SAGARIKA  
LOOKS JUST LIKE THE  
QUEEN. COME, THE  
KING IS WAITING.



WHEN VASANTAKA LED THEM TO UDAYANA—



MEANWHILE, SAGARIKA APPROACHED THE MADHAVI BOWER DRESSED IN THE QUEEN'S CLOTHES.



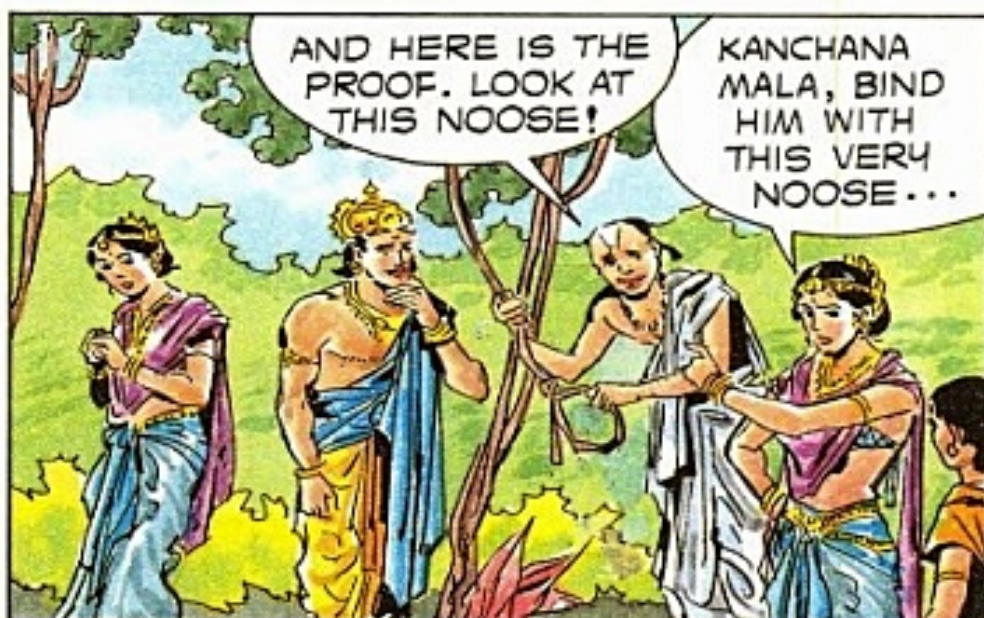








AND I BROUGHT HIM HERE ONLY BECAUSE I THOUGHT IT WAS YOU.



AND HERE IS THE PROOF. LOOK AT THIS NOOSE!

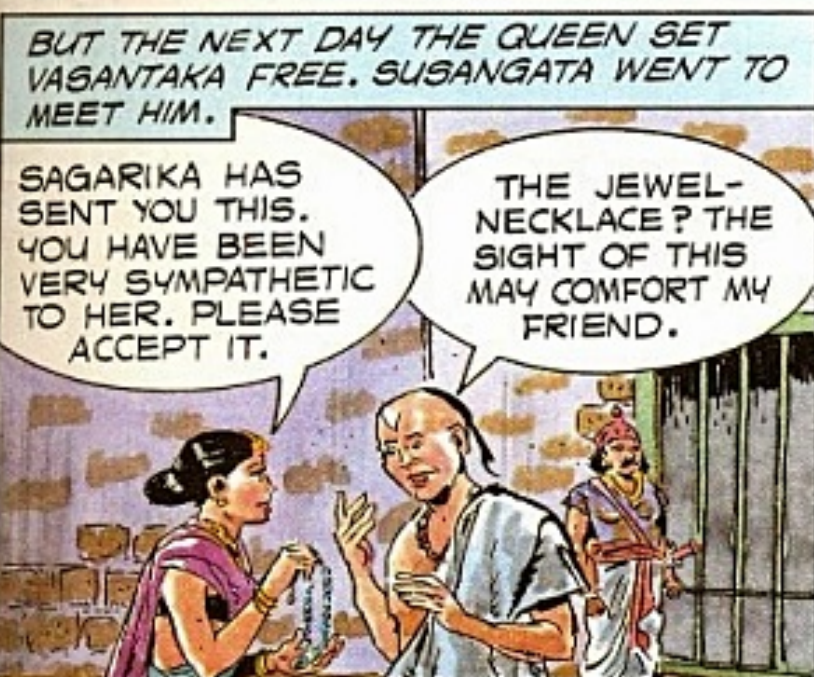
KANCHANA MALA, BIND HIM WITH THIS VERY NOOSE...



... AND TAKE AWAY SAGARIKA AND LOCK HER UP.

HOW UNFORTUNATE I AM NOT TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DIE AS I WISHED!

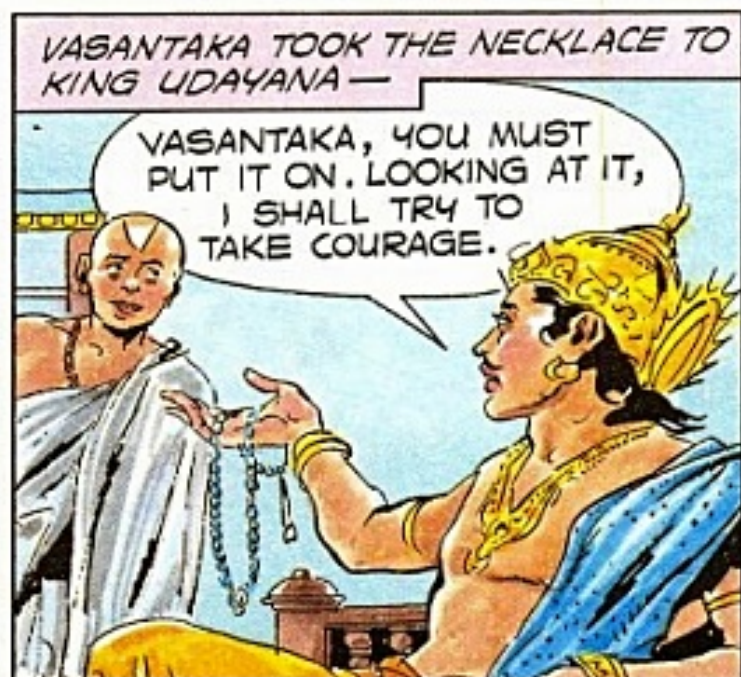
AND KANCHANA MALA LED VASANTAKA AND SAGARIKA AWAY AS UDAYANA WATCHED HELPLESSLY.



BUT THE NEXT DAY THE QUEEN SET VASANTAKA FREE. SUSANGATA WENT TO MEET HIM.

SAGARIKA HAS SENT YOU THIS. YOU HAVE BEEN VERY SYMPATHETIC TO HER. PLEASE ACCEPT IT.

THE JEWEL-NECKLACE? THE SIGHT OF THIS MAY COMFORT MY FRIEND.



VASANTAKA TOOK THE NECKLACE TO KING UDAYANA —

VASANTAKA, YOU MUST PUT IT ON. LOOKING AT IT, I SHALL TRY TO TAKE COURAGE.



LATER IN THE AFTERNOON, A MAGICIAN FROM UJJAYINI CAME TO THE PALACE TO PERFORM BEFORE KING UDAYANA AND QUEEN VASAVADATTA.

HERE YOU SEE BRAHMA, VISHNU AND MAHESHWARA, AND THERE — THE APSARAS DANCING.

YOU FOOL, SHOW SAGARIKA IF YOU WANT TO PLEASE THE KING!



JUST THEN AN ATTENDANT CAME IN.

I BEG YOUR PARDON FOR INTERRUPTING, YOUR MAJESTY. BUT VASUBHUTI, THE MINISTER FROM SIMHALA, SEEKS AN AUDIENCE.

MY UNCLE'S MINISTER! WE SHOULD SEE HIM AT ONCE!

BUT, YOUR MAJESTY, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN MY BEST ITEM! PERMIT ME . . .

LATER, NOT NOW.





THEN VASUBHUTI ENTERED AND PAID HIS RESPECTS TO UDAYANA.

I BRING BAD NEWS:  
OUR SHIP HAS SUNK.  
ONLY YOUR ENVOY AND  
I MANAGED TO SURVIVE.  
YOUR BETROTHED,  
PRINCESS RATNAVALI,  
WHOM WE WERE  
BRINGING TO KAUSHAMBI  
WAS DROWNED IN  
THE STORMY SEA.

MY BETROTHED...

MY DEAR  
COUSIN!  
NO!!

JUST THEN—

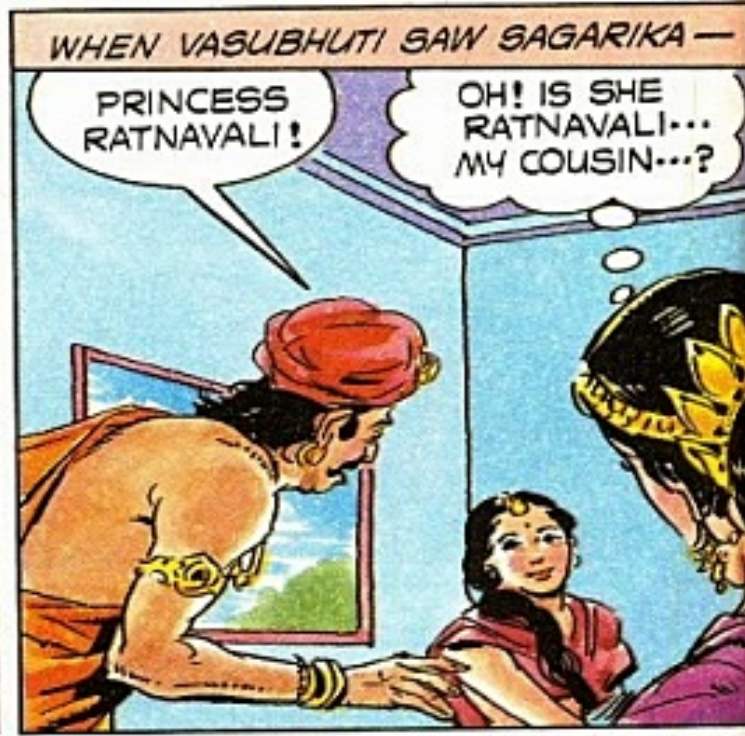
FIRE! FIRE!  
THERE IS A FIRE IN  
THE INNER  
APARTMENT.

MY LORD! SAVE  
SAGARIKA! HER HANDS  
AND FEET HAVE BEEN  
BOUND ON MY ORDERS.

UDAYANA DASHED INTO THE INNER APARTMENTS.

SAGARIKA!







THEN VASUBHUTI EXPLAINED HOW RATNAVALI CAME TO BE BETROTHED TO KING UDAYANA ON THE INITIATIVE TAKEN BY YAUGANDHARAYANA.

MY LORD, I WONDER WHY YAUGANDHARAYANA TOLD US NOTHING.

HE MUST HAVE HAD HIS REASONS. WE'LL SEND FOR HIM.

YAUGANDHARAYANA CAME AT ONCE —

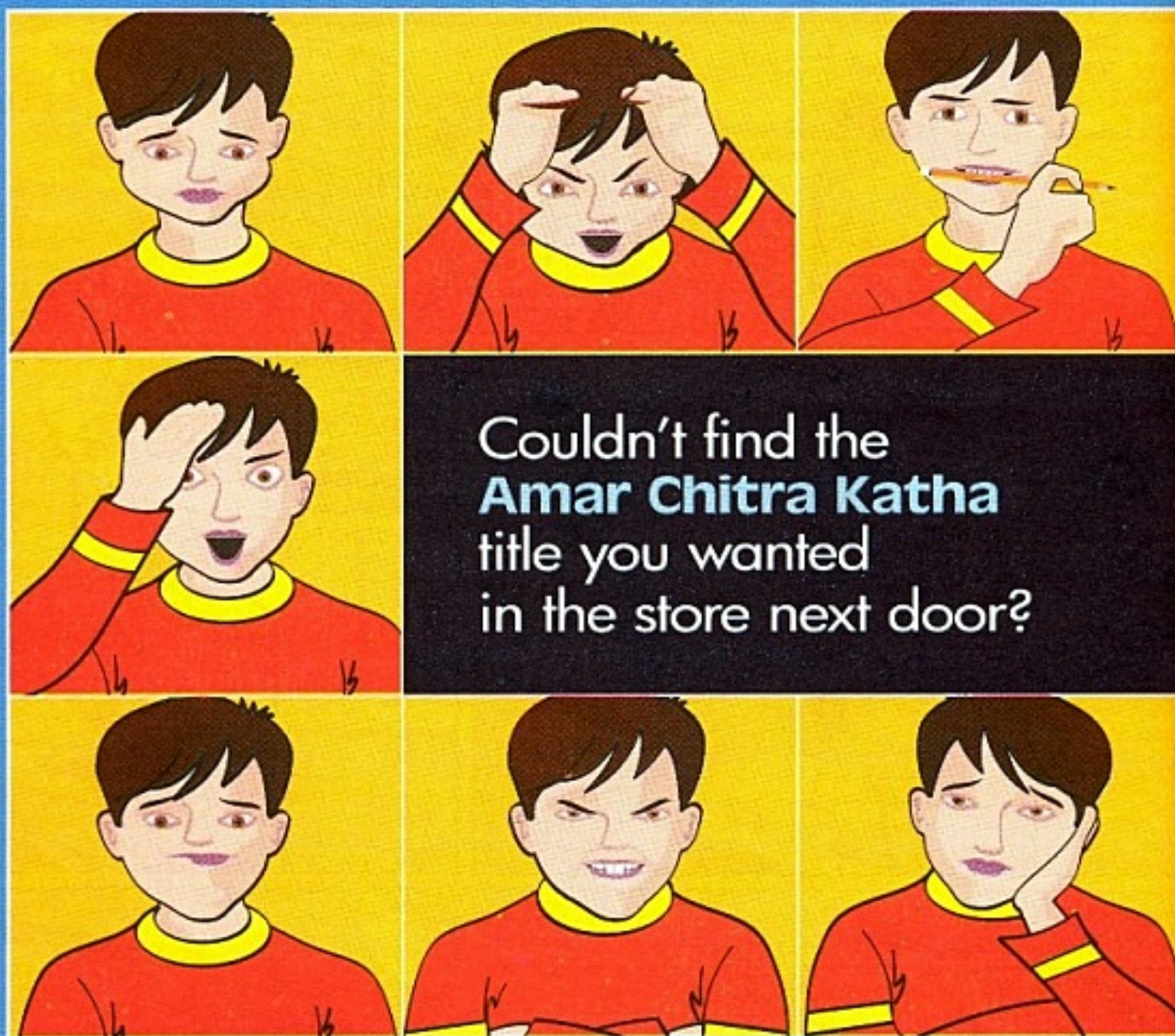
I HEARD A SAGE PROPHECY THAT THE MAN WHO MARRIES RATNAVALI WILL BECOME THE GREATEST OF KINGS...

... AND THAT'S WHY I TRIED TO BRING ABOUT A MARRIAGE BETWEEN YOU, MY LORD, AND THE PRINCESS OF SIMHALA.

THEN VASAVADATTA LED RATNAVALI TO UDAYANA.

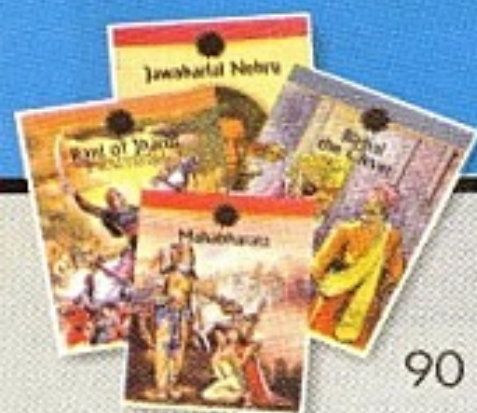
MY LORD, ACCEPT MY COUSIN AS YOUR WIFE.





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